

THE LEISURE HOUR.

A FAMILY JOURNAL OF INSTRUCTION AND RECREATION.

"BEHOLD IN THESE WHAT LEISURE HOURS DEMAND,—AMUSEMENT AND TRUE KNOWLEDGE HAND IN HAND."—*Corper.*



THE CHAPEL OF THE OLD JESUIT COLLEGE AT MALAGA.

FATHER PEDRO'S CONVERT.

Is the oldest part of the town of Malaga there is, or was towards the end of the last century, a street known as that of Maria de Gloria. It had been the principal street of the quarter called Il Judea, before Philip II banished from his dominions all Jews and Moors who would not be converted; and from the time of that gracious king

it was the stronghold of Spanish Christianity, containing within its bounds the Priory of St. Lazarus, the office of the Inquisition, and the Jesuit College. Its large and ancient houses, once inhabited by the wealthiest merchants in the town, and built in that eastern fashion in which Jew or Moor alike delighted, with windowless outer walls and central courts, were not calculated to enliven the narrow street, but were admirably adapted to the above-

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mentioned establishments, and the sons of St. Ignatius had secured the best of them. The building was theirs by grant from the Catholic Philip. They had been in full operation there for almost two hundred years; yet there were old people in Malaga who knew it as the Jews' house, and a lingering tradition asserted that immense riches had been hidden somewhere about the premises by the Hebrew merchant who left it under the edict of banishment, and that once in every seven years some member of his family—whether alive or dead the populace were not certain—came to see if the treasure were still safe.

The honour of those hidden riches and septennial visits was, however, contested by another mansion at the opposite end of the town. It was better situated, at the top of a street which sloped up to the hill vineyards, while the Jews' old quarter lay so low and near the sea that it was lucky for it the Mediterranean had no tides. It was a larger fabric, and built in the same oriental style, but there were evidences of greater cost and antiquated splendour about it. Marble floors inlaid with porphyry and jasper, panels painted in arabesque, remnants of cornices on which texts from the Koran still glittered in letters of gold, and traces of fortification remaining on roof and wall, in some degree confirmed the popular tale that it had been the hereditary seat of a noble Moorish family, who were Cids of Malaga under the Saracen kings, and had dwelt in their ancient home long after the Christian conquest, till the converting zeal of Philip II compelled them to choose between it and their Moslem faith, when the treasure was hidden and the visiting every seven years began. So stood the claims of the two houses; but public opinion was rather in favour of the Moorish mansion as the true deposit of the trove. There was scarcely a town of southern Spain that did not contain some house or ruin with a similar legend. It was known that a prediction had been current among the banished Moors, regarding the re-occupation of the country by their race. The keys of Cordova and Seville were said to be kept in Morocco as pledges of that prophecy, and wealthy families were believed to have buried in the land the riches they could not conveniently take with them, employing the arts of sorcery and enchantment for which their Christian conquerors gave them credit, to insure concealment till the Crescent again triumphed over the Cross.

Houses, like their owners, suffer from the caprices of fortune. Notwithstanding its advantages of situation, size, and repute, the Moors' house never obtained a more orthodox title, and was occupied by no fraternity of church or state in the course of two centuries. An extensive cork merchant had owned it as his warehouse. A notable silk-grower had held it as his factory. Wine had been stored there, figs had been dried, olives had been pressed, and now it was a granary for the rich and abundant harvests gathered from the lands of the Marquis de Malaga, and prudently sold to the corn merchants. The Marquis reckoned himself of the blue blood of Castile, and his patrimony had been as small as most of that lofty lineage.

He had been in and out of royal favour, sent on foreign embassies, and permitted to retire to his estate; but in all those turns of the wheel, the Marquis had kept a keen eye to his worldly interests. When in favour at court, he had made an honest penny by farming the royal revenues. When ambassador abroad, he had realized a trifle in presents, which would now be called bribes; and when allowed to withdraw to his estate, he supervised his steward in turning field and vineyard to the best advantage. Of course, a noble *hidalgo* could not be visible in such matters, but the Marquis directed behind the scenes. Nicolo executed his commands; but, as he also was superior to dealing with corn-traders, the Marquis retained, in quality of go-between, Morice Durone.

Morice, as his name implies, was a Frenchman, and, what was almost as bad in Spain, he was a Protestant, from the fair and industrious town of Lyons. It was not for religion's sake that he had left his country and settled at Malaga: the days of persecution were long over; but his family had been one of the many ruined by the revocation of the Edict of Nantes; they had lost broad lands where silk and olives grew; one branch had been driven into exile in England, and another had been reduced to comparative poverty. Morice belonged to the latter, and had been brought up an *epicier*, or grocer, which in France occupies a post equal to that of the tailor among ourselves. Even as an *epicier*, Morice did not succeed in his native town. He tried many another city with no better fortune; went over the Channel to see his relations, who had become British subjects; and partly by their help, partly by his own address, got a sort of agency from one of the great London houses to buy up dried fruit and the like in Malaga.

There Morice settled himself in one of the worst houses of the old Jews' quarter. He had it at a low rent; his own commission on the figs and raisins was not considerable; but there was plenty of hard work in getting them packed and shipped, not to speak of harder bargains to be made with the Spanish farmers. The house, though rather crazy in roof and walls, destitute of drains and not over well supplied with windows, was conveniently situated, for it fronted the harbour, stood within a street of the old market-place, to which the best fruit was still brought, and opened on a back lane leading through winds and alleys direct to the Marquis's granary. It was probably owing to that lane that Morice had been honoured with the nobleman's confidence. Messages could be sent and interviews held with little observation; moreover, Morice made himself useful, would sell off anything, and worked for small remuneration. The noble Marquis particularly wanted somebody to sell dear and work cheap just then. His star had been for some time eclipsed at the Escorial; but while he improved his release from the cares of state by superintending Nicolo and the farm, as usual, great events happened in that seat of Spanish royalty and etiquette. The prime minister offended the queen's confessor; some said by speaking lightly of the Dominican Order, to which the holy father belonged; some, by stepping before

him into the royal closet; however it was given, grievous offence was taken, and, as a natural consequence, Don Josés de Camara lost the reins of government, and Don Jago de Sigura found them. Besides being a liberal patron of the Dominicans, Don Jago had a large family, and substantial acknowledgments to make for his high office, not only to the confessor, but to half the princes of the blood. It was therefore necessary for him to raise the wind in all quarters, and a gentleman of his household was permitted to write to the retired Marquis in secrecy, assuring him of the high opinion which Don Jago entertained of his merits, and intimating that a return to the levée, if not an embassy to Versailles, might be secured by proper application. The Marquis had been too long at court not to know what a proper application signified. An embassy to Versailles had been the desire of his heart for many a year; the presents there were worth looking after, and he exerted himself to get up refreshers for Don Jago.

Before this time of increased activity, Nicolo had scraped acquaintance with Morice in the market. Nicolo was a serviceable steward, though rather suspected of putting more into his own pocket, in his master's absence, than the prudent Marquis would have allowed to go there. He had an interest in securing his master's return to court and the embassy. Morice had assisted him in the making of some tough bargains, so he recommended him to his lord; he was tried with two or three trifling commissions, and the heretic from beyond the Pyrenees was found to be the right man in the right place. Henceforth Morice sold everything for the Marquis: not only his sacks of fine wheat and pipes of sweet wine, but lots of wind-dried raisins, rancid oil, mouldy maize, in short, all the unsaleable remnants of his crops. Better than that, Morice accounted honestly for every rial, never took a quartil beyond his commission, and kept his noble employer's name as clear of those trading transactions as that of the Grand Turk.

Don Gomez de Malaga was aware that such an agent might not be found in every lane; he did not increase Morice's commission in consequence, for to serve a Marquis and a Spaniard of the blue blood was a recompence in itself; but he intrusted him first with some antiquated plate, which would be more useful in the shape of modern coin; then with a quantity of gold and silver lace, which had decorated his old court dresses; and, lastly, with a tin case of ancient Moorish manuscripts, collected by his grandfather's great uncle, who had been Inquisitor of the province. No later branch of the house of Malaga had found any use for the contents of that case; but, being gathered by the Inquisitor, they had been treasured among the family archives till their sagacious descendant, considering that vellum was so scarce with the notaries that they were willing to write their deeds and contracts over the work of earlier scribes, as Christian monks had done with the heathen classics many an age before, thought the Moorish manuscripts might as well be sold for what they would bring, and deputed Morice to get the best price, with uncommonly strict orders

not to mention him in the business; for all Moorish writings ran some risk of heresy, and the Holy Office was still a flourishing institution. Morice undertook the task cheerfully, as he had done so many equally difficult ones, and it proved the most rapidly executed. Before the Marquis went home to supper the same evening, the full price expected for his Moorish vellum was counted out in an alcove of the great hall which formed his wheat store. Such expedition elicited the noble Don's warmest applause. As it was the only reward he ever bestowed, the Marquis was on the whole liberal with that commodity, and on the present occasion he also condescended to ask how and where Morice had made so quick a sale.

"To one of my own countrymen, noble seignior, who chanced to be passing through the city, and who thought the vellum would bring him some profit in France."

This was still more satisfactory. The gatherings of his grandfather's great uncle would be out of the reach of the present Inquisitor. Don de Malaga praised his faithful agent once more, and dismissed him with assurances of his high consideration. The manuscripts were the last thing he had to sell that season; but the wherewithal to make the proper applications had been raised. With it the Marquis adjourned to court, to the great satisfaction of Nicolo; and there he played his cards so well, that the embassy to Versailles was actually accomplished in spite of seven bidders for the place, every one of as blue blood as himself.

It was remarked by the few who got so deep into Morice's private affairs, that money was more than usually scarce with him after the Don's departure, and an English carpenter who made raisin boxes for the London firm insinuated that he had lent him some ducats; while the general opinion was that he would miss the Marquis. Morice, however, found more engrossing, if not more profitable, employment. The Jesuit College, in the street of Maria de Gloria, like its kindred establishments at this period, began to bestir itself for the public good. The Order was out of favour at Rome. Courts, even to the Escorial, had begun to frown on it; in fact, the holy brethren knew that their suppression was contemplated by the successor of St. Peter; and since neither tiara nor crown would stand by them, they determined what could be done with the people. There was a deal of charity exhibited; a few miracles were got up in backward quarters. The age for them in populous cities was gone; but preachers of known ability were sent to officiate in every town where the brethren had home or hold, and a certain Father Pedro, long famous in Madrid, was appointed to stir up the slumbering souls of Malaga. His preaching succeeded so far, that the small chapel of the college, which had been the banquet hall where the Jew kept his Passover, was filled to overflowing. The bull-fights being forbidden, for it was Lent, the town had no other attraction; everybody ran to hear the new preacher, and among them Morice Durone. His Spanish neighbours knew him to be a heretic; but his faith being no worse than his country in their eyes, he

was allowed to march on his downward way without let or hindrance. His first appearance in the Jesuit chapel was nevertheless a remarkable event. Nobody present could help taking notice of his evident attention and frequent emotion. Father Pedro was undoubtedly operating powerfully on the heretic's soul, and at length the whole town was edified by the tale of his conversion. He had sought an interview with the eloquent preacher, declared that his conscience would not allow him to rest in the errors of his Protestant education, and humbly solicited reception into the bosom of the Mother Church.

The brotherhood did not make many conversions in those days, and they made much of Morice Durone. The former rank of his family was magnified up to nobility. They had all been obstinate heretics for ages, and now their most promising scion having come to Spain, doubtless by the order of Providence, was converted by the eloquence of Father Pedro. If that did not wake up the church to the value of the Society, nothing would. Morice's reception was a grand ceremonial, at which all the treasures of relics, vestments, and altar-plate belonging to the college were displayed. Father Pedro preached one of his best sermons—at least, people thought so—for it was the fullest of Latin quotations. Half Malaga attended in the chapel and in the street, though the bishop, knowing how the wind blew at Rome, fell sick rather than countenance the Society by his presence; but everybody admired the devotion of the convert. All his relations in France and in England, as soon as they heard the news, wrote to disown him. The shrewd people of Malaga remarked that a Frenchman never recanted for nothing; but Morice held on his way, attending mass, prayers, and confession, with every appearance of sincerity, minding his business as heretofore, and manifestly looking for no temporal fruits of his conversion. The brotherhood considered him a shining example of reclamation from heresy. Father Pedro, in particular, was proud of his special work. The preacher, though keen, clever, and subtle, after the fashion of his Society, had two weak points, which, by the way, are not uncommon in the brotherhood, for he was somewhat vain, and somewhat fond of getting. From the signal service he had done to the college by his preaching, and the repute he acquired in the town as a confessor, it was thought proper at head-quarters to remove the superior, and promote Father Pedro to his office.

[To be continued.]

A NIGHT WITH THE ETHNOLOGISTS.

My curiosity having been considerably stimulated by the notices recently given of the discovery of a number of skulls in the diggings near Wroxeter, (the Uriconium of the Romans,) I availed myself of the introduction of a friend, to attend a meeting of the Ethnological Society, where I had an opportunity of seeing the crania, and collecting the opinions of the learned respecting them. As these crania have excited a considerable amount of public

attention, I am led to think that many readers of the "Leisure Hour" might like to peruse my record of what I saw and heard at the interesting *soirée* at which it was my privilege to be present.

To my mind, there was something instructive and seriously affecting in the spectacle I witnessed as soon as I entered the room. There were present some thirty or forty living heads, deeply occupied in the contemplation of the half dozen crania laid on the table just under the eye of the president. The gentleman through whose zeal for our instruction they had been brought to light and to London, was then furnishing his record of the conditions in which they had been found, and giving many interesting facts to assist the meeting in forming its conclusions respecting them. Our ethnographers pursued their inquiries, and offered their opinions, with becoming respect for the dead, whose remains they handled with all due reverence—very unlike the grave-digger in "Hamlet," who threw up his skulls with a song. The skull of "Poor Yorick" had lain "i' the earth three and twenty years," so that Hamlet could say, "I know him." These "domes of thought" had lain in the "dead past" some thirteen or fourteen centuries, and the only striking resemblance they bore to the remains in the churchyard scene, was the curious fact that one of the skulls was like that of the supposed lawyer, who had "his fine pate full of fine dirt."

The whole of these crania were dug out of a light loamy soil, from the depth of a foot to two feet and a half. The spot whence they were exhumed, which is elevated some thirty or forty feet above the level of the neighbouring river, is ascertained to have been within the walls of the buried city of Uriconium, now in the process of excavation. The loamy soil in this ancient grave is so friable and fine, that, except when wet, it forms a light powder, easily transported by the wind. It is the cause of much inconvenience to the excavators, who have to desist from the work when a constant wind has rendered it impossible for them to proceed with safety. Only one of the skulls was supposed to belong to a female, and the whole indicated adult age. From their oval form, the symmetry of their proportions, and their dimensions, it may be concluded that they belonged to a race considerably advanced in civilization. It will be observed, therefore, that these are not the remains of those early Celts who dwelt in this island before the Roman invasion, and the vestiges of whose rude art are at present the subject of scientific investigation. The difference between the round skull of the early Celt, and the oval forms under consideration, is well known to all who have given attention to the physical distinctions that mark the various branches of the human family.

It ought, perhaps, now to be mentioned that a great amount of curiosity had been awakened respecting these crania, from the report that they all exhibited a remarkable kind of deformity. By external pressure they had been somewhat flattened in the lateral portions, in a manner which it was suggested might have been artificial, when in infancy or at a later period. The causes which

may have produced this deformation were not suggested; but somehow the notion was very generally entertained, that we were to find proof that, during the Roman era, a race of barbarous people dwelt in this county, who, like the ancient Peruvians and other degraded peoples, sought to improve upon nature by giving the heads of their children a quadrilateral form. It was left for the learned members of the Ethnological Society, and the strangers present by their courtesy, to investigate the facts and interpret them—to say whether the deformation were the result of design or accident, whether produced in infancy or at a later age, or whether its date was posthumous, and if so, whether soon after death or by some cause of slow and prolonged action.

That the skulls had been subjected to pressure from the sides was evident to every one who examined them. It appeared also that the effect was so to distort the fore part of the head as to alter the direction of the sight—an object which no persons, however barbarous, would be likely to wish for. The hinder portions of the head and the forehead gave no evidence of such artificial pressure as would have been employed if any attempt had been made to impress them with new forms.

From the statement of Mr. Wright, that these remains were all found just within the site of the ancient Roman city, we may suppose, according to the suggestion offered by that gentleman, that they were not Roman, as that nation adopted the wise sanitary regulation of extra-mural interment. From the varied positions in which the bodies lay, it was inferred that the interments took place before the introduction of Christianity, or certainly before this portion of the native race had embraced it. It seemed to be a rational supposition that these were some of the native population who had besieged the city, and perished soon after entering within its walls, and, having fallen victims, were buried by their countrymen on the spot where they fell. We say "buried," for we have the circumstance of their orderly interment on the authority of Mr. Wright, whose name is intimately associated with the excavations, conducted under his superintendence. There is a tradition among the people near Wroxeter, that the old Roman city, after standing a prolonged siege, was taken by a curious stratagem. The Britons, it is said, collected some thousands of sparrows, and, having tied firebrands to their feet, set them free, when they alighted on the roofs of the city, which, being of thatch, the whole place took fire, and in the alarm and confusion the besiegers rushed in and took the city. It is some deduction from the truth of this story, that ample evidence exists that the houses were not roofed with thatch, but with flags of stone; and its value is further reduced by its commonness, it being similarly told of Cirencester, Silchester, and some half dozen other places of antiquity.

Without undertaking to report the valuable observations of the various speakers, who brought to the discussion a great amount of learning, anatomical, ethnographic, and archaic, I have to state that they were unanimous in the opinion that the deformation was attributable to posthumous causes.

The deformation was not congenital, showing itself at birth, like the varieties that distinguish the various races of the genus *homo*. Deformities produced in the first instance by artificial means are not perpetuated, as is clearly shown by the feet of the Chinese women, who are all born with feet of the natural size, notwithstanding the efforts made to prevent their proper development. Neither was it regarded as being produced by applying bands or boards, or any means of pressure, to the head in infancy, or at a later period. As to the change being after death, the learned disputants were all agreed; and it appeared also that the gentleman by whom the question was raised, felt perfectly satisfied with this conclusion.

Some difference of opinion still remains as to the way in which the deformities were produced after interment. From the circumstance that none of the plates composing the crania were fractured, and that they assumed their present form without great resistance, the conclusion is derived that the cause, whatever it might have been, began to operate before the bones had derived the rigidity they would assume from the loss of animal as distinguished from mineral matter. As to the mode in which the forces operated on the crania when lying in the earth, it appeared to be a very general opinion that the hypothesis of a superincumbent pressure beginning to act as soon as the head had fallen on one side might be taken as sufficient. As the discussion proceeded, however, the notion was suggested that it would be unnecessary to suppose any such pressure from above; and the importance of this idea will be seen when it is remembered that these remains were covered by not much more than two feet depth of light earth. It was thought that the lower side of each cranium would soften, and so yield, from lying on the moist earth, and that then the upper side would begin gradually to sink in. The author of this opinion seemed to gain the concurrence of a considerable portion of the company; and some respect was also given to the hypothesis that the action of frost and excessive heat had told on the results under contemplation. This I give as a faithful representation of the recent discussion of this interesting subject.

The buried city in which these relics were found is about a mile and three-quarters in extent, and a mile in breadth. As the excavations proceed, we may expect that the foundations of the whole of this Roman city will be laid bare. Probably, from the time of its capture and destruction, it has remained undisturbed, and the earth has gradually been allowed to accumulate and cover it up. It is about a year since a mass of building known from time immemorial as the "old wall" was cleared, to the north of which was discovered a large building which appears to have constituted the public baths of *Uriconium*. They appear in many respects to correspond with similar remains in Pompeii and in Rome. In the middle of this building there is a large square inclosure paved with narrow red bricks, set in something like herring-bone form. It is supposed to have been a place of public meeting, and may have been the market-place or forum. The workmen have come upon a street paved with

small round stones, like those in some of our old English towns. The excavators have also discovered the foundations of several dwelling-houses of considerable importance, in one of which is a hypocaust, about 25 feet by 23, still in good preservation. A quantity of burnt wheat has been discovered, as in the Roman house at Blenheim, near Oxford; and other proofs are furnished that the city, or some portion of it, was destroyed by fire. Mr. Wright, under whose superintendence the work of excavation is proceeding, says that "the houses seem generally to have been roofed with micaceous slate, set lozenge-shaped, so that from a distance, when seen in the sunshine, (as it occupies a beautiful elevation from the Severn, commanding the Vale of Shrewsbury,) the Roman city must have glittered like a city of diamonds."

It would be to the honour of our country if the necessary funds were furnished for carrying forward the work of exploration with more rapidity, and under constant superintendence of such a kind as to secure the due record of every discovery. No vestige of the remains of this interesting Roman city should be allowed to escape observation; and it will be not much to our honour, as an enlightened people, if this rare opportunity is not improved to the utmost extent.

A CUSTOM OF THE "CUSTOMS."

ONCE a year or so, or perhaps a little oftener, there takes place at the Custom House a rather remarkable kind of exhibition, which endures for a few days, and is then followed by an auction sale, also rather remarkable, which, however, does not take place at the Custom House, but at the Commercial Sale Rooms, Mincing Lane. The exhibition consists of an *omnium gatherum* collection of various articles, differing marvellously in character and description, and the bare enumeration of which would fill a goodly number of these columns. They comprise nearly every portable species of goods of continental manufacture, from the costliest gems and jewellery down to farthing toys, and from brandy in the butt to delicate laces and embroidery. There are all sorts of carving and cabinet work—of scientific instruments—of clocks and watches—of appliances photographic and electrical, and of musical instruments, fragmentary or entire.

All these multifarious objects are the property of the Queen, and have become so in consequence of their having in some way or other infringed the Customs regulations of the country. It is not to be supposed, however, that in the mass they represent so much roguery and smuggling, or attempts at smuggling. A portion of them have doubtless become so forfeited, and their quondam owners are justly punished by the loss of their property, for designing to defraud the revenue. But a good many of the articles have lapsed to her Majesty, owing to some neglect or informality, never contemplated by their owners; others have been abandoned by the exporters, on the discovery that nothing would be gained, except perhaps a loss, by paying the duty upon them and sending them into

the market; while others—and these, we imagine, constitute a large proportion of the whole—are what are called *ad valorem* goods, which have been retained by the Custom House officers and paid for at the prices set upon them by their owners.

A word of explanation seems necessary here. Upon most goods which pay duty on entering the British markets, a definite amount is levied according to a fixed tariff; but it is found in practice impossible to attach a definite duty on all kinds of wares, as things apparently quite similar may yet differ immensely in value, owing to high and elaborate finish in the workmanship, and other causes not readily perceptible save to those familiar with such species of manufacture. In such cases, it is obviously just that the duty should be rated in proportion to the value of the article; and therefore it is so rated. One consequence of this plan, however, is, that foreign manufacturers are too frequently induced to put a lower nominal value on their goods than they are really worth, in order to escape a high duty. To meet and counteract this tendency on their part, the Customs authorities reserve to themselves the right of purchasing any of the *ad valorem* goods at the prices set upon them by the owners, who are thus occasionally punished for attempting to evade a portion of the just duty. But out of this practice of the Customs authorities has arisen another consequence, not generally recognised or talked about, but which is perfectly well known to importers of certain descriptions of goods. Manufacturers abroad, knowing the contingencies to which the *ad valorem* goods are exposed, will make up a description of wares which are intended to meet these contingencies—wares which shall look well and yet be valued at a low figure, and which they would as willingly sell to her Majesty at the price they set on them, as have them passed through the customs and into the market in the regular way. There is a case in point ticking in our pocket as we write: it is a gold hunting-watch, lever movement, jewelled in ten holes, with compensation (?) balance, carefully finished works, and a couple of stout cases. It has been going well for the last seven years, varying about a minute and a half in a week from Greenwich time, and is in all respects a handsome and serviceable article—having on its dial, in characters too small to be read without a magnifying glass, the words, (say) "Etienne Horloge et Frères, St. Croix." Now we happen to know from the best authority, that Monsieur Etienne Horloge (say) made this watch, and some hundred others like it, on purpose for her gracious Majesty to buy. It cost us exactly ten pounds, including the duty, and was bought at a Custom House sale. It suited Monsieur Etienne Horloge quite well to let her Majesty have these watches at ten pounds sterling each, minus the duty; and their superior appearance, weight of metal, and evident good workmanship, tempted the revenue officers to buy them, in the hopes of making a profit themselves; for in all cases where such goods are taken at a valuation and sold, the profit, if any, is divided equally between the officers who seize and the Crown. The foreign manufacturer who plays this game must furnish a good article at a low price, and in this instance, at

least, he has done so; if his profits are small, he has, on the other hand, the advantage of prompt cash payments and exemption from the liability to bad debts. We are not aware to what extent this sort of speculation has been carried by the foreign producers, or whether it has ever been followed by other than jewellers and makers of time-pieces; but there are so many curious things in the mass of matters to be sold, which could never have got there out of the grasp of the contrabandist, that we are inclined to think that the *ruse* is, or rather has been, pretty generally practised.

But, to return to the exhibition. It is not by any means a crystal palace sort of affair. The show-room is a place of plastered walls and unpolished undusted wooden counters, and the exhibitors are the officers and their subordinates, who keep a sharp eye on everybody and everything. The room is crowded with people, among whom the gentler sex are not wanting, and there is further present a generous sprinkling of sons and daughters of Israel; and all are busy in viewing, handling, and testing the plethora of goods exposed on all sides. Whoever wants to inspect a particular lot, asks for it by the number in his catalogue, and it is pointed out to him if exposed to view, or if not, is withdrawn from the lockers and put into his hands. The catalogue is a bulky pamphlet, containing something short of two thousand lots in all, and therefore it takes several days for all the buyers to become satisfactorily acquainted with the goods: they make the best use of their time, for they know—that perhaps you do not know—that the whole stock to be sold will be seen no more after this exhibition is closed, until the several lots are knocked down and the wares are deliverable to the buyers.

The sale by auction, which will extend over several days, comes off, as before stated, in Mincing Lane, and it presents a scene differing most essentially from that of the average auction rooms of the metropolis. You will note, in the first place, that not only is there no exhibition of the goods sold, but there is no description of them: all that is put up for sale is Lot 45, or Lot 450, irrespective whether it be a child's cradle or a score of revolvers; and, in the second place, you will note that there is none of that ridiculous waste of time observable elsewhere, while a lot destined to sell for £7 is crawling up to that climax, under the competition of the crowd, from a bidding of 10s. The Customs auctioneer will submit to no such nonsense as that: generally, he starts the lots himself. Supposing it to be Lot 246, three gold watches, he says, "246, £25;" and if he says that, you may be sure he does not intend to take less. Somebody is pretty sure to nod, and thus accept the bidding, when, unless there be an almost instantaneous advance, down goes the hammer, and the watches are "gone." In all such "sudden death" movements you may imagine, if you like, that the goods sold are the retained *ad valorem* goods, and that the upset price is the price that has been paid for them by the seizing officers, plus the duty and a small percentage for expenses; and if you imagine that, be assured that you will not be always mistaken. When the lot is not started by the auctioneer, but

is left to the unguided competition of the crowd, if you watch the proceedings you may see something to astonish you—only do not let yourself be tempted, by the appearance of a great bargain, to bid for what you know nothing about: if you do, it may happen to you, as it has happened to others before to-day, that, when the hour of delivery comes, you shall be glad to pay the price you have bidden for the goods, and yet leave them still in the Queen's warehouse. The fact is, that you may be called on to pay the duty in addition to the price at which the lot was knocked down, and may find that the said duty alone is far more than the lot is worth to you or any one else.

There is another respect in which the Custom House sale differs from all other miscellaneous sales in the metropolis—it is a *genuine* sale; and we should hesitate positively to affirm as much of any other goods sale advertised in the "Times" throughout the year. Whatever the wares at the Custom House are worth in ready money, that the owner of the property receives. Her Majesty is not exposed, as her subjects are, to the gross villainies of auction conspirators, and "knocking-out" gangs, who, all London over, make a prey of the unfortunate, and fatten on the spoils of the widow and the orphan.

We have given the above brief sketch of a Custom House sale at this time, because it is one of our commercial phases which we have a notion is on the point of disappearing. The new tariff, which came on the carpet along with Mr. Gladstone's budget, will put an end to the levying of duties on so many articles of foreign manufacture, that, when that has once come into operation, the attractions of the Custom House sale will have vanished, if the sale does not die out altogether. If any of our readers, therefore, wish to have a deal with her Majesty, they had better make haste about it, and not miss the next busy gathering in Mincing Lane, which it is probable will be the only opportunity ever offered them in that quarter, of purchasing, as Messrs. Chowser would say, "unprecedented bargains" from such an "extensive assortment of continental manufactures."

UP THE HOOGLHY.

"HEAVE the main yard aback, and lay to for a pilot." We have arrived at the mouth of the Hooghly, and want a pilot for Calcutta. Valuable freights have drawn so many ships here, that the "Board" cannot supply pilots fast enough to meet the demand for them; so we shall probably have to remain where we are all night, and wait the arrival of some homeward-bound vessel down the river from Calcutta, which will have no further need of one. The wished-for gentleman at length arrives, and, being favoured by the south-west monsoon, we proceed rapidly up the river.

We were joined at Diamond Harbour by a gang of Lascars, called "tow-boat-wallah," who assisted our crew in working the ship. The leadsmen give their soundings in a most plaintive tone: "Sât baam milla nai," "Cheh baam," etc. etc.—no bottom

at six or seven fathoms. A boat-load of hats of rice straw, fans of cocoa-nut leaf, and curiosities of all sorts, came alongside. I need only repeat the boat-wallah's own recommendation of his cargo: "Ebery ting got, sahib." But on my requiring something he did not happen to possess, he very promptly and wisely qualified that assertion by saying, "Ebery ting got—dat ting not got."

We moored the ship off Coolies' Bazaar, about a mile below Calcutta, and were soon thronged with bāboos, sircars, dobie-wallahs, etc. Now, bāboos are merchants, sircars ship's messengers, and dobie-wallahs, washmen. There, on the quarter-deck, is a chicon-wallah (seller of chicon work embroidery), and the custom-house officer making a bargain with him for the captain's lady, well knowing that he best can do it, as Mr. Chicon-wallah is completely in his power, and if he does not quietly submit to be beaten down to about half his first-named price, all his chicon work will be seized and safely lodged in the customs. All greeted us with the most profound salaams, submissively waiting to be taken notice of in their turn, and receiving with the most servile adulation any favours we might bestow.

The captain and his lady are now going on shore to take their evening drive on the Esplanade, and the boatswain is giving vent to one of his most piercing pipes, as the latter is hoisted over the ship's side in a chokey (or chair in slings) and lowered into the dingy alongside. They are carried from the boat to the landing-place in a chair, between two coolies; and, on the lady's placing her foot once more on *terra firma*, she is beset with the attentions of some half-naked black little urchins, who are longing to wipe her shoes, not admitting the question as to whether they require it or not, and crying loudly for "Backshish, mem sahib!" "Charity, lady!" and anything in the shape of a copper satisfies them. In fact, the assiduous attentions that ladies meet with in India, from whites as well as blacks, are, in the humble opinion of the writer, apt to spoil some of the most simple-minded and well-intentioned of the sex.

Calcutta has been aptly named "the City of Palaces;" in fact, there would be no living in the small close houses they build in England, with a view to exclude the cold air. The houses, or bungalows (as they are called), are surrounded by a verandah, or passage round the building, which is quite open on the outside; the roof is supported by massive pillars, which take the place of an exterior wall; the rooms are entered from the verandah, the smaller apartments surrounding one of large dimensions in the centre. There is generally one story above the ground-floor. Punkahs are suspended from the ceiling the whole length of the apartment, which are kept in motion by strings leading into an adjoining room through a hole in the partition, and held in the hands of bearers (or native footmen), who are never better pleased than when they have a job they can manage on their haunches or some other lazy position. Nearly all the churches in Calcutta, too, are possessed of these useful appendages, and they are kept in motion all Sunday; so that a church in Calcutta is about the coolest place in the city.

The scenery on the banks of the Hooghly is not very striking. The foliage is rich, and here and there overtopped by a towering palm tree; in the immediate vicinity of the river are paddy fields, skirted with cocoa-nut trees.

The river, I cannot say, adds much to the beauty of the scene; it is very muddy, and the dead bodies of natives that float down the stream at ebb tide, some with vultures and cormorants hovering about them, do not present the most agreeable spectacle. Some of these are probably devotees, trusting in Gunga (the Ganges) for the washing away of their sins, and sacrificing their lives to that deity. The tide ebbs very fast, at the rate of about twelve miles an hour, which makes it rather a precarious roadstead for ships to anchor in.

The bore (as it is called), or great tidal wave, comes up sometimes, lifting ships clean out of their moorings, some of which consequently come into collision with each other, and others drift on shore, incurring great danger to the lives of those on board, as well as damage to the ships themselves. The bore is a single gigantic wave, some ten or even twenty feet high, which crawls stealthily up the river, generally at spring tides. It also is worshipped as a deity: in fact, any great natural phenomenon is regarded as a powerful author of mischief, and therefore deprecated from committing its ravages on them.

But our serang (boatswain) tells me that there is a "hobsonjobson" (great merry-making) going on on shore this afternoon, when there is to be a "tum-tum," and a "putelleh-nauteh," which I must witness, if possible, leaving the description of it till some future time.

Dr. Russell, the "Times" reporter in India, thus gives his first impressions of the Hooghly:—

"This morning the noble river—for all rivers are noble which are big, dirty, and have plenty of ships, though this stream is as full of danger as the Mississippi is of snags—has narrowed considerably. We lay-to during the night to suit some phase of tide or bank, and now we are screwing up against the very muddy boiling current, increased in force by an ebb tide. Here we are amid 'The Silas E. Burrowes, of Boston, U.S.,' 'The Marquis of Tweeddale, of Glasgow,' 'Rustamjee Puckerjee, of Calcutta,' 'Les Trois Frères, Bordeaux,' and several native vessels of large tonnage, which are trying, by the aid of a light wind, to beat up against the tideway, and the hands at our wheel must be strong and quick. And there, in effect, with real straw hats, under which are curled long tails which would enrapture Marsh or Truffitt, in neat clean toggery, bull-necked, square-shouldered, and strong-legged, stand the four Chinese helmsmen, coned by the English quarter-masters, upping with the helm and downing with it, and—letting her go about or round, or keeping her just within a few yards of the Parsee's quarter—we scrape through and screw on, and by-and-by, the banks on each side strike out bodily to meet us, and the faint verge of green, which refreshed the eye last night, turns into a belt of cocoa-nuts worthy of Ceylon. Villages there are also up muddy creeks, which put one in mind of tide-deserted



A GRIFF LANDING AT A GRAT IN A DINGY.

cyots at Chiswick suddenly tenanted by quaint boats, and people who had just bathed in the Thames and had not scraped the black mud off them.

"The river itself is not interesting; the tropical vegetation and hues which give such a charm and novelty to Ceylon have disappeared, and the coconut trees which fringe the banks are wearisome to the eye, owing to their uniformity of size, foliage, and colour. The muddy river, churned into yellowish buttery foam where it chafes against the sandbanks, is of the colour and breadth of the Mersey at New Brighton. There is immense noise on board, and great anxiety, for the luggage and baggage is coming out of the hold, swayed up by reckless arms on the running tackle, and the fine overland trunks, hat-boxes, gun-cases, and ladies' boxes, arrive on deck in various stages of ruin. Indeed, one gentleman suggests that the Company must be in league with the overland trunk and portmanteau makers, and permit several of the *employés* of the latter to live down in the hold and break up the luggage at their leisure. Meanwhile, the river

narrows, and the navigation becomes more dangerous. The masts of a full-rigged ship, which rise above the surface close to us, at an obtuse angle, point out the place where one fine vessel was lost a few days ago. The tides and currents are so very strong and rapid, that if a ship touches the bank they capsize her the moment her keel strikes, and the suddenness of the exploit is in proportion to the fineness of her lines and the depth of the keel.

"About noon we have advanced to a more civilized country; the villages are larger, the fields better cultivated. After a time, detached houses, with high sloping roofs like those of the older Swiss farm-houses on the Bernese Oberland, come into view, mostly on the right bank of the river. A few of them are two-storied, and the sides are protected by deep verandahs and porticoes. They are painted white and buff, or light-bluish grey, and stand in detached gardens, fenced in by trees, plantations, and shrubberies. I make my first bow to a 'pucka' house. In the balconies, sheltered from the sun, are groups of Europeans—mostly

women, for the bread-winners have gone up to Calcutta—who salute imaginary friends and wave their handkerchiefs as the vessel surges upwards.”

LORD DUNDONALD.*

LORD COCHRANE—his original title, and that by which he is still best known, as it was that under which his great exploits were achieved—was born at the ancestral mansion in Scotland, in the year 1775. His lordship sets out with a due account of his family—especially of his father, a man of genius, too, who lost a fortune, while speculators realized more than one, by his devotion to the pursuit of science. His father's watch, or portrait, or snuff-box—or some other trifle, we forget which—was consequently all that our hero, out of originally broad domains, inherited from his ancestors. By his own good sword, however, we trust he has fully restored their patrimony, and unquestionably he has for ever increased their fame.

He was originally destined for the army—a point on which his father was somewhat despotic. The son's inherent taste for the sea, however, broke through all these paternal bonds; and, after figuring some time in pipe-clay, pig-tail, and hair-powder, and being subjected to other military barbarities in the days of George III, as a subaltern of the 104th regiment, he resolutely renounced the army, and entered as a midshipman on board the ship of his uncle, the Honourable Admiral Cochrane. He was in the seventeenth year of his age at this time, and precociously tall. He describes himself as previously, in his military capacity, presenting a most burlesque appearance.

“By way,” he says, “of initiation into the mysteries of the military profession, I was placed under the tuition of an old sergeant, whose first lessons well accorded with his instructions not to pay attention to my foibles. My hair, cherished with boyish pride, was formally cut, and plastered back with a vile composition of candle-grease and flour, to which was added the torture incident to the cultivation of an incipient queue. My neck, from childhood open to the lowland breeze, was encased in an inflexible leathern collar or stock, selected according to my preceptor's notions of military propriety—these almost verging on strangulation. A blue semi-military tunic, with red collar and cuffs, in imitation of the Windsor uniform, was provided; and to complete the *tout ensemble*, my father, who was a determined Whig partisan, insisted on my wearing yellow waistcoat and breeches; yellow being the Whig colour, of which I was admonished never to be ashamed. A more certain mode of calling into action the dormant obstinacy of a sensitive, high-spirited lad could not have been devised than that of converting him into a caricature, hateful to himself, and ridiculous to others.

“As may be imagined, my costume was calculated to attract attention, the more so from being accompanied by a stature beyond my years. Passing one day near the Duke of Northumberland's palace at Charing Cross, I was beset by a troop of ragged boys, evidently bent on amusing themselves at the expense of my personal appearance, and in their peculiar slang indulging in comments thereon far more critical than complimentary.

“Stung to the quick, I made my escape from them, and, rushing home, begged my father to let me go to sea with my uncle, in order to save me from the degradation

of floured head, pig-tail, and yellow breeches. This burst of despair aroused the indignation of the parent and the Whig, and the reply was a sound cuffing. Remonstrance was useless: but my dislike to everything military became confirmed; and the events of that day certainly cost his Majesty's 104th Regiment an officer, notwithstanding that my military training proceeded with redoubled severity.”

The instructor to whom he was next turned over was as great an oddity as himself, with his “floured head, pig-tail, and yellow breeches.” Mr. Larmour, the naval officer alluded to, belonged to a race now extinct in Her Majesty's service; and the details given of him by his lordship are rich indeed:—

“My kind uncle, the Hon. John Cochrane, accompanied me on board the ‘Hind,’ for the purpose of introducing me to my future superior officer, Lieutenant Larmour, or, as he was more familiarly known in the service, Jack Larmour—a specimen of the old British seaman, little calculated to inspire exalted ideas of the gentility of the naval profession, though presenting at a glance a personification of its efficiency. Jack was, in fact, one of a not very numerous class, whom, from their superior seamanship, the Admiralty was glad to promote from the forecabin to the quarterdeck, in order that they might mould into ship-shape the questionable materials supplied by parliamentary influence—even then paramount in the navy to a degree which might otherwise have led to disaster. Lucky was the commander who could secure such an officer for his quarterdeck.

“On my introduction, Jack was dressed in the garb of a seaman, with marling-spike slung round his neck and a lump of grease in his hand, and was busily employed in setting up the rigging. His reception of me was anything but gracious. Indeed, a tall fellow, over six feet high, the nephew of his captain, and a lord to boot, were not very promising recommendations for a midshipman. It is not impossible that he might have learned from my uncle something about a military commission of several years' standing; and this, coupled with my age and stature, might easily have impressed him with the idea that he had caught a scapegrace with whom the family did not know what to do, and that he was hence to be saddled with a ‘hard bargain.’”

Jack, however, after cruelly cutting off his lordship's sea chest by the key-hole, as too big by half, improved upon acquaintance:—

“Poor Jack! his limited acquaintance with the world—which, in his estimation, was bounded by the taffrail and the bow-sprit—rendered him an indifferent judge of character, or he might have seen in me nothing but an ardent desire diligently to apply myself to my chosen profession, with no more pride in my heart than money in my pocket. A short time, however, developed this. Finding me anxious to learn my duty, Jack warmly took me by the hand, and as his only ideas of relaxation were to throw off the lieutenant and resume the functions of the able seaman, my improvement speedily rewarded my kind though rough teacher, by converting into a useful adjunct one whom he had, perhaps not unjustifiably, regarded as a nuisance. We soon became fast friends, and throughout life few more kindly recollections are impressed on my memory than those of my first naval instructor, honest Jack Larmour.”

His lordship, thus well trained betimes, had the satisfaction of being received in 1798 as a supernumerary by the brave Lord Keith, who was at this period appointed to supersede the now incompetent (from age) Earl St. Vincent. Our hero, too, about this time, had the good fortune to meet a congenial spirit, the immortal Nelson, of whom he has given some interesting notices, as well as subjoined some remarks, which at the present moment may be serviceable:—

* The Autobiography of a Seaman, by the Earl of Dundonald, C.C.B. London: Bentley.

"From Gibraltar we proceeded to Sicily, where we found Lord Nelson surrounded by the *élite* of Neapolitan society, amongst whom he was justly regarded as a deliverer. It was never my good fortune to serve under his lordship, either at that or any subsequent period. During our stay at Palermo, I had, however, opportunities of personal conversation with him; and from one of his frequent injunctions, 'Never mind manœuvres—always go at them,' I subsequently had reason to consider myself indebted for successful attacks under apparently difficult circumstances.

"The impression left on my mind during these opportunities of association with Nelson, was that of his being an embodiment of dashing courage, which would not take much trouble to circumvent an enemy, but, being confronted with one, would regard victory so much a matter of course as hardly to deem the chance of defeat worth consideration.

"This was, in fact, the case; for though the enemy's ships were for the most part superior to ours in build, the discipline and seamanship of their crews was in that day so inferior as to leave little room for doubt of victory on our part.

"Trafalgar itself is an illustration of Nelson's peculiar dash. It has been remarked that Trafalgar was a rash action, and that, had Nelson lost it, and lived, he would have been brought to a court-martial for the way in which that action was conducted. But such cavillers forget that, from previous experience, he had calculated both the nature and amount of resistance to be expected; such calculation forming as essential a part of his plan of attack as even his own means for making it. The result justified his expectations of victory, which were not only well founded, but certain.

"The fact is, that many commanders in those days committed the error of overrating the French navy, just as, in the present day, we are nationally falling into the still more dangerous extreme of underrating it. Steam has, indeed, gone far towards equalizing seamanship; and the strenuous exertions of the French department of Marine have perhaps rendered discipline in their Navy as good as in ours. *They, moreover, keep their trained men; whilst we thoughtlessly turn ours adrift whenever ships are paid off—to be re-placed by raw hands in case of emergency!*"

The "Speedy" was the vessel which Lord Cochrane was now appointed to command. She was a curious-looking craft, though a sad nuisance to the enemy. Says his lordship: "She was about the size of an average coasting brig, her burden being 158 tons. She was crowded, rather than manned, with a crew of eighty-four men and six officers, myself included. Her armament consisted of fourteen *four-pounders*!—a species of gun little larger than a blunderbuss."

But still, she occasionally got into a scrape. Her mode of operating was to keep out of sight by day, and run into shore by night, to cut out the enemy's gunboats, etc., and carry off whatever was neither too hot nor too heavy for removal. On one of these occasions, however, Cochrane caught a Tartar; having, on the supposition that she was a huge merchant-ship, run the little "Speedy" under the port-holes of a Spanish 50-gun vessel. His lordship was prompt, and, though he has been assailed for not attacking and carrying the enemy under such circumstances, the *ruse* to which he had recourse was perfectly justifiable, and reflects not less honour on him than his most dashing exploits.

He soon showed that his forbearance on that occasion did not arise from any want of audacity; for, shortly afterwards meeting at sea a large Spanish Xebec frigate, he performed one of the

most dashing deeds ever done on the ocean. The following is his own account of this action:—

"As some of my officers had expressed dissatisfaction at not having been permitted to attack the frigate fallen in with on the 21st of December, after her suspicions had been lulled by our device of hoisting Danish colours, etc., I told them they should now have a fair fight, notwithstanding that, by manning the two prizes sent to Mahon, our numbers had been reduced to fifty-four, officers and boys included. Orders were then given to pipe all hands, and prepare for action.

"Accordingly we made towards the frigate, which was now coming down under steering-sails. At 9.30 A.M. she fired a gun, and hoisted Spanish colours, which the 'Speedy' acknowledged by hoisting American colours, our object being, as we were now exposed to her full broadside, to puzzle her, till we got on the other tack, when we ran up the English ensign, and immediately afterwards encountered her broadside without damage.

"Shortly afterwards she gave us another broadside, also without effect. My orders were not to fire a gun till we were close to her; when, running under her lee, we locked our yards amongst her rigging, and in this position returned our broadside, such as it was.

"To have fired our pop-gun four-pounders at a distance would have been to throw away the ammunition; but the guns being doubly, and, as I afterwards learned, trebly shotted, and being elevated, they told admirably upon her main deck; the first discharge, as was subsequently ascertained, killing the Spanish captain and the boatswain.

"My reason for locking our small craft in the enemy's rigging was the one upon which I mainly relied for victory, viz. that from the height of the frigate out of the water, the whole of her shot must necessarily go over our heads, whilst our guns, being elevated, would blow up her maindeck.

"The Spaniards speedily found out the disadvantage under which they were fighting, and gave the order to board the 'Speedy'; but as this order was as distinctly heard by us as by them, we avoided it at the moment of execution by sheering off sufficiently to prevent the movement, giving them a volley of musketry and a broadside before they could recover themselves.

"Twice was this manœuvre repeated, and twice thus averted. The Spaniards, finding that they were only punishing themselves, gave up further attempts to board, and stood to their guns, which were cutting up our rigging from stem to stern, but doing little farther damage; for after the lapse of an hour the loss to the 'Speedy' was only two men killed and four wounded.

"This kind of combat, however, could not last. Our rigging being cut up, and the 'Speedy's' sails riddled with shot, I told the men that they must either take the frigate or be themselves taken, in which case the Spaniards would give no quarter—whilst a few minutes energetically employed on their part would decide the matter in their own favour.

"The doctor, Mr. Guthrie, who, I am happy to say, is still living to peruse this record of his gallantry, volunteered to take the helm: leaving him therefore, for the time, both commander and crew of the 'Speedy,' the order was given to board, and in a few seconds every man was on the enemy's deck—a feat rendered the more easy as the doctor placed the 'Speedy' close alongside with admirable skill.

"For a moment the Spaniards seemed taken by surprise, as though unwilling to believe that so small a crew would have the audacity to board them; but soon recovering themselves, they made a rush to the waist of the frigate, where the fight was for some minutes gallantly carried on. Observing the enemy's colours still flying, I directed one of our men immediately to haul them down, when the Spanish crew, without pausing to consider by whose orders the colours had been struck, and naturally believing it the act of their own officers, gave in, and we were in possession of the 'Gamo' frigate of 32 heavy guns and 319 men, who, an hour and a half before, had looked upon us as a certain prey."

For this bold deed, however, Cochrane received no promotion. He had already had the misfortune to fall under the reprehension of Lord St. Vincent, for making some remarks more complimentary to his lordship's age than his capacity for command as chief Lord of the Admiralty; and his first lieutenant, Mr. Parker, having been refused promotion, on the baseless pretext that "the number of men killed on board the 'Speedy' did not warrant the application," he retorted with a spirit—impelled, doubtless, more by youth (for as yet he was not more than five-and-twenty) than prudence, though we honour him the more for it—that long placed him on what are termed the "black books" of the Admiralty. This was the secret of his lordship's disfavour for many years with the naval authorities at home, though his disgrace has been most falsely attributed by their apologists to his inordinate appetite for prize-money.

He, in fact, contemplated retiring from the service, so strongly did he find the official tide set in against him; and for some months he withdrew to the University of Edinburgh, where he then studied, in the year 1802, along with the present British premier, Viscount Palmerston, under the celebrated Dugald Stewart.

But the salt water possessed superior charms for him. On the renewal of the war with France, next year, he applied for the command of a ship, but was several times put off or refused by Lord St. Vincent. "In short," said the disappointed hero, "it became clear that the British navy contained no ship of war for me. I frankly told his lordship as much, remarking that as 'the board were evidently of opinion that my services were not required, it would be better for me to go back to the College of Edinburgh and pursue my studies, with a view of occupying myself in some other employment.' His lordship eyed me keenly, to see whether I really meant what I said, and observing no signs of flinching—for, beyond doubt, my countenance showed signs of disgust at such unmerited treatment—he said, 'Well, you shall have a ship. Go down to Plymouth, and there await the orders of the Admiralty!'"

The "Arab," however, the vessel to whose command he was now appointed, was a still more disreputable affair than the "Speedy." She was also yet more inappropriately named, being, says his lordship, a regular "tub," so utterly unfit for all hostile purposes, that he was sent to look after the fishing-boats in the North Sea. This, of course, was only an act of malevolence on the part of poor old Lord St. Vincent, now becoming utterly unfit for administration in his age. But Lord Melville being shortly afterwards appointed to the control of the navy, justice was at last done to Cochrane, and he was appointed to the command of the "Pallas," a new 32-gun frigate.

Cochrane had now an opportunity of doing something for himself as well as his country; for he was stationed off the Azores, which then presented an admirable field for the acquisition of that prize-money, which he, in common with all seamen, like. So zealous was he in the pursuit of this, that not only did he secure a very satisfactory supply of

"jewels, ingots, dollars, and plate," but returned to Plymouth, on one occasion, like another Van Tromp; the only difference between him and the celebrated Dutch admiral, who swept the English Channel with a broom at his mast-head, being, that he (our hero) returned to Plymouth "with three golden candlesticks, each about five feet high," placed upon the summits of his masts.

He had got so much money, indeed, that he had enough to spare for the very expensive luxury of contesting the representation of Westminster in Parliament, and was now returned, along with Sir Francis Burdett, as member for that immaculate city. He did not, however, shine in Parliament, his politics being of a somewhat radical hue, and himself having a most disagreeable habit of speaking the truth. To get rid of him, and the unpalatable inquiries he instituted into naval abuses, he was consequently soon appointed to the command of the "Impérieuse" frigate.

His most celebrated action of all, accordingly, now commences. Duly appointed by Lord Collingwood, a man equally good and great, he had now an opportunity of showing what he could do; though, unfortunately, he was placed under the immediate command of Lord Gambier, a naval officer equally destitute of courage and capacity. Before, however, Cochrane had fallen under the blight of this incompetent naval commander, Collingwood, the darling friend of Nelson, thus bears testimony to his merits:—

"I inclose a letter which I have just received from the Right Hon. Lord Cochrane, captain of the 'Impérieuse,' stating the services on which he had been employed on the coast of Languedoc. Nothing can exceed the zeal and activity with which his lordship pursues the enemy. The success which attends his enterprises clearly indicates with what skill and ability they are conducted, besides keeping the coast in constant alarm, causing a general suspension of the trade, and harassing a body of troops employed in opposing him. He has probably prevented those troops which were intended for Figueras from advancing into Spain, by giving them employment in the defence of their own coasts."

Lord Cochrane's acknowledgment of this high compliment was commensurate, and in terms not unworthy of his fame.

"My object then was," says he—"as from long and unceasing experience I considered myself entitled to the command of more than one ship—to propose to the Government to take possession of the French islands in the Bay of Biscay, and to let me with a small squadron operate against the enemy's seaboard there, as I had previously done with the 'Speedy' and 'Impérieuse,' from Montpellier to Barcelona. Had this permission been granted, I do not hesitate to stake my professional reputation that neither the Peninsular war, nor its enormous cost to the nation, from 1809 onwards, would ever have been heard of. It would have been easy—as it will always be easy in case of future wars—that is, provided those who have the direction of national affairs have the sagacity to foresee disaster, and, foreseeing it, to take the initiative—so to harass the French coast as to find full employment for their troops at home, and thus to render any operations in western Spain, or even in foreign countries, next to impossible."

His lordship's italics, we may subjoin, are his own; and shortly afterwards he proceeded to his memorable attack on the fleet of the enemy in Basque Roads.

The French fleet, under Villeneuve, was at

anchor in a position of great strength, protected by heavy batteries on shore, and guarded from attack by a formidable boom, "composed of large spars bound by chains, and moored along its whole double line with heavy anchors, forming the most stupendous structure of the kind on record." It was most important that this fleet should be disabled, because at any moment when unwatched it might have slipped out to sea, and been down upon the West India Islands or elsewhere. The English admiral, Lord Gambier, would not take the responsibility of attacking such a position, and the senior captains were equally averse to so perilous an enterprise as that which Lord Cochrane proposed.

On the night of the 11th of April, 1809, the wind blowing hard, and the sea being high, Lord Cochrane was at last permitted to make the attack. The service being a desperate one, as the manning and conduct of fireships ever must be, it was left to volunteers; but a sufficiency of officers and men came forward for the purpose. The "Impérieuse" stood in to the edge of a shoal, where she anchored, with one of the two explosion-vessels prepared by Lord Cochrane, made fast to her stern; it being his intention, after having fired the first, to return for the other, to be used as circumstances might suggest. Three frigates were anchored at a short distance from the "Impérieuse," to receive the crews of the fireships on their return. Lord Cochrane had also contemplated that their position there would enable them to support the boats of the fleet, which should have been ready to assist the fireships. "But," says he, with significant brevity, "the boats of the fleet were not, for some reason or other, made use of at all."

Accompanied by one lieutenant (Bissel) and four seamen, Lord Cochrane went on board the largest of the explosion-vessels, containing fifteen hundred barrels of powder, several hundred shells, and nearly three thousand hand-grenades. The fireships were to follow. Drifting through the darkness, the gallant six soon neared the estimated position of the French ships, and Lord Cochrane having kindled with his own hand the port fires, they hurried into the boat, and pulled away for their lives, with a strong wind and sea against them, which materially retarded their progress.

"To our consternation, the fuses, which had been constructed to burn fifteen minutes, lasted little more than half that time, when the vessel blew up, filling the air with shells, grenades, and rockets; whilst the downward and lateral force of the explosion raised a solitary mountain of water, from the breaking of which in all directions our little boat narrowly escaped being swamped. In one respect it was, perhaps, fortunate for us that the fuses did not burn the time calculated, as, from the little way we had made against the strong wind and tide, the rockets and shells from the exploded vessel went over us. Had we been in the line of their descent at the moment of explosion, our destruction from the shower of shells and other missiles would have been inevitable.

"The explosion-vessel did her work well, the effect constituting one of the grandest artificial spectacles imaginable. For a moment the sky was red with the lurid glare arising from the simultaneous ignition of 1500 barrels of powder. On this gigantic flash subsiding, the air seemed alive with shells, grenades, rockets, and masses of timber, the wreck of the shattered vessel; whilst the water was strewn with spars shaken out of the

enormous boom, on which, according to the subsequent testimony of Captain Proteau, whose frigate lay just within the boom, the vessel had brought up before she exploded. The sea was convulsed as by an earthquake, rising, as has been said, in a huge wave, on whose crest our boat was lifted like a cork, and as suddenly dropped into a vast trough, out of which, as it closed upon us with the rush of a whirlpool, none expected to emerge. The skill of the boat's crew, however, overcame the threatened danger, which passed away as suddenly as it had arisen, and in a few minutes nothing but a heavy rolling sea had to be encountered, all having again become silence and darkness."

By the *monstre* explosion the boom was shattered, and a clear way made for the fire-ships. Out of twenty-five only five approached the enemy, and even these did no damage. The alarm caused by them, however, was so great that the French ships cut their cables and drifted ashore. Daylight revealed the helpless condition of Villeneuve's fleet, and Cochrane anxiously signalled for the advance of the British ships—"All the enemy's ships, except two, are on shore"—"The enemy's ships can be destroyed"—"Half the fleet can destroy the enemy"—"The frigates alone can destroy the enemy"—"The enemy is preparing to heave off." No reply was vouchsafed, save the acknowledgment that the signals had been observed!

The conduct of Lord Gambier at this juncture forms a disgraceful episode in the naval history of England. It would be painful to dwell on the subject, but it is only right to state that it was not Lord Cochrane's fault that an attack of unparalleled daring was not followed by complete success.

AN HOUR WITH THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES.

WEARIED with the tediousness of the debates in Congress, which (unlike those of our cherished British Parliament, that resemble the discourse of the ancient philosopher, "on all things and some others besides"—*de rebus omnibus et quibusdam aliis*—) are usually confined to a very limited and domestic range, we at length seized an hour for paying our respects to President Pierce. We had been duly provided with an introductory letter some time before, from New York, by a politician of the most "rowdy" order; but, having some doubts whether our friend was now in estimation at "the White House," in consequence of his having declined to put the wheels in motion, or "pull the wires" for a re-nomination, had hitherto refrained from presenting it.

In this emergency we were recommended to have recourse to the advice of Sergeant —, a noted Hibernian official, once, we believe, an officer (non-commissioned) in the British army, but who now presides over the door department of the chief magisterial residence of the United States with an ability and potentiality truly astonishing. The Sergeant, we were informed (we regret his name has escaped our recollection, and that we cannot thus in these pages hand him down to that immortality of which he is worthy), was the most powerful man in the whole length and breadth of the Republic. "He wakes up the President," said a gentleman to

us, "in the morning, takes care of him all day long, and at night puts him to bed." It was accordingly not without some species of awe that we approached this specimen of the Western Cerberus; but truth compels us to add, he was a far more agreeable representative of his order than any we had ever found in the eastern hemisphere. Whether it was or not that he retained the hereditary disposition of his countrymen for "blarney," we are ignorant; but certain it is, he received us with eminent suavity, the sincerity of which we should have doubted, had he not in the sequel proved to be wholly disinterested. Had the Sergeant merely contented himself with assuring us that we were "welcome as flowers in May," we should have deemed it but a compliment due to any stranger; but, to our astonishment, he greeted us with the information that we should be more cordially received than either Prince Albert or the Prince of Wales, "until they had taken out their first papers," that is, expressed their intention of renouncing allegiance to Queen Victoria, and becoming free and independent American citizens.

Eminently flattered by the address, we bowed, and were bowed by the Sergeant in return into the waiting-room, the brace looking, we doubt not, more like the ancient *preux chevaliers* than those well-known Roman soothsayers whom Cicero, or some other worthy of old, used to admire for their gravity and command of countenance, in meeting in the highway without laughing in each others' faces. We should first, however, premise that it is a considerable step from the halls of the legislature to the presidential mansion. On arriving at the opposite extremity of Pennsylvania Avenue, you find the White House on a slight elevation to the right, rising but little above a small pestiferous burn named the "Tiber," in front. The present Italian river is a translucent and respectable stream in comparison to this transatlantic namesake, and the position of "the People's House," as the mansion is sometimes also termed, is consequently highly unhealthy.

On entering, we were immediately convinced that in all senses of the word it was worthy of this name, for the sovereign people there assembled, and others whom we afterwards saw, seemed to consider it entirely their own, and were accustomed to enter it at pleasure. Our friend the model door-keeper who received us—as we believe he receives all strangers—with such courtesy, follows a very different course with the natives, or adopted citizens of the model Republic. He would evidently dispense with the visits of the great majority if he could, but he does not venture to say so, inasmuch as the popular sovereign would at once despotically turn him out of office, should he dare to evince the slightest appearance of disrespect to his liege lord. All that poor Pat—who evidently is a man of innate amenity—can do is to let them pass in with resignation. He is all-powerful with the President; but any attempt to control the people, even in the shape of door-mats and spittoons, he has long since seemingly given up in despair. Two popular sovereigns accordingly entered along with us—one a huge Kentucky farmer, the other a Chicago office-hunter.

On passing the portal, you are conducted, or make your way, to a large elegant *levée* room, about ninety feet in length and thirty in breadth, to the left. Thence you enter, at pleasure, a still more handsomely furnished drawing-room—oval—on the right. Here the President receives his company when he holds a *levée*, and they pass out by a red-coloured but similarly decorated chamber, to the right. It is rare, however, that he holds such ceremonies; though, at his usual evening receptions, the rooms are crowded, and a most miscellaneous assemblage is then to be found. If you desire to see the chief magistrate of the country by day, you walk up to a diminutive and exceedingly plain room on the second floor, where his private apartments are. Only a few maps, and a small print of Washington, adorn this most unpretending of all official apartments. A table stands in the middle of the room, surmounted by a few newspapers; and you are, perhaps, engaged in perusing one of them, when an unassuming-looking gentleman, the President of the mighty Republic, suddenly enters, and, taking you by the hand, says he is "glad to see you." If welcome, or of note, you will be conducted by him into a room half the dimensions, and plainer still. It is his private closet, or sitting-room, and its aspect is positively bald. Scarcely a letter or vestige of paper is to be seen on the table, and some large books of reports alone adorn the walls. The President, too, is just as unpretending as he looks, and, though eminently self-possessed, as unassuming as his apartment. It is difficult to conceive the ruler of a great country so plain—and so plain without the slightest loss of dignity. He addresses all as if they were on a perfect level with himself; and, truth to say, they are so, equally now and on his descent from power. He is rarely, however, treated without respect; and it frequently becomes necessary for him, on the other hand, to show that he is a thorough wide-awake man of the world. The customers he meets with are sometimes rough, the applications he receives are often strange; and it consequently becomes necessary for him to become emphatic. Having no place to ask for, of course we were made unusually welcome, and honoured with an interview so long that we should have felt ourselves guilty of intrusion, had we not heard the crowd of hungry applicants stamping by the adjoining door. We saw that he wished us to remain; but it would be improper for us to repeat, in a public journal, the conversation which ensued in private. Suffice it to say that the President's remarks strictly corresponded with his policy. He expressed sympathy with the popular cause in Europe, and hoped to see it triumphant; but would neither interfere officially, nor permit American citizens to interfere, unless they first denationalized themselves. On the other hand, while such was his attitude towards European powers, he was equally resolved to resist their intervention in American affairs.

It was difficult to conceive how a man such as this should have become so unpopular; but, as already explained, it arose from the unhappy disposition and despotic conduct of his principal

secretary of state. The other members of the cabinet were polite and gentlemanly men—JEFFERSON DAVIS, a high-spirited Southron, though he upheld slavery as a natural right, and CALEB CUSHING, a Northern man, who was ready to prove by the Bible that it was a divine institution. The former of these gentlemen was Secretary of War; the other, from Massachusetts, filled the post of Attorney-General. Both possessed more than average abilities; but the remaining members of the cabinet were mere nonentities; and the Postmaster-General, we think, was the laziest official we ever saw in our life, as he sat all day with his legs upon a table, whittling at the arm of his chair, and believing the American post-office (the worst) the best of all human institutions.

We were afterwards present at an evening presidential reception, and a more heterogeneous assemblage was perhaps never witnessed: ladies from Boston, pluming themselves upon their intellect; fine, though tawdry folk from New York, who loudly, in so far as vulgar display was concerned, vaunted their wealth; and pretty Quakeresses from Philadelphia, with the smartest bonnets we ever saw, piquing themselves on their birth. Huge Western farmers, too, were there; with no lack of shrewd Yankee speculators in wooden hams and artificial nutmegs. The evening's entertainment wound up by the entrance of some Cherokee or Iroquois Indians, who seemed somewhat to oppress their "big father," as they termed the President, by the depth of their devotion, and appeared to have been participating largely in the excitement of "fire-water." We quitted at eleven, when several hundreds of the company still lingered, and we could not help commiserating the President, who during several hours had been forced to stand and shake hands with at least as many thousands.

PAST *versus* PRESENT.

I AM tired of hearing about the "good old times," which some folk, who ought to know better, are so fond of casting in our teeth. When were they? Where are we to look for them? I fear, only in the imagination of these well-meaning but silly and misguided people. The old times were comparatively bad times; this much-abused nineteenth century is a great and increasing improvement on them; and "there's a good time coming" better still.

Can any one in his senses, after reading Lord Macaulay's History, or any other (if such there be) which condescends to forget the "dignity of history," and introduce us to the everyday life of our forefathers, honestly wish that the state of things, at any given period of the past, could be reproduced at the present day? Would he wish to return to the ignorance and lawlessness of the middle ages? Would the poor be better off, or the rich more comfortable? Such a wish can only be the offspring of ignorance; and the most inveterate *laudator temporis acti*, if he be a candid man, would be cured by a judicious course of historical reading. If not, argument would be wasted on

him: nor need any worse punishment be wished for him, than that he could be transported for a year into the midst of his own ancestors, of whatever date he liked. When the first feelings of natural surprise and curiosity had passed off, and when he had indulged in a little antiquarian research, he would speedily arrive at a perception that he was deprived of most of the conveniences, refinements, and comforts of civilized life, and would be shocked and disgusted at every turn. Long before the expiration of the year, he would eagerly desire to be restored to his despised 1860, no matter what century he might have selected for his experiment. So true is it that men too often do not value advantages till they are deprived of them, and are ungratefully disposed to think the condition of other men better than their own, instead of making the best of matters, and living content with such things as they have.

"The good of other times let others state;
I think it happy I was born so late."

I utterly scout the idea of the progressive and continual degeneracy of mankind, physical, intellectual, or moral. Don't believe it. There have not been wanting sciolists and pessimists in every age to uphold this theory, which is entirely confuted by the deductions of more accurate thinkers. And though our great-grandchildren, we hope, will excel us as much as we have surpassed our great-grandmothers, we may take it for granted that some of them will be found foolish enough to extol us as paragons of everything good and wise. On the same principle, people when they grow old are apt to imagine that nothing now is worthy to be compared with what they remember in their youth. Summers *were* summers then, and the world was altogether more beautiful. People were more handsome, orators more eloquent, and fashions more becoming in those days, they think. This is simply because, at that time, their perceptions and feelings were keener and more lively, and they were more able to admire and enjoy. They attribute the alteration to outward things, when in reality it has taken place in themselves. The change, in fact, is not objective, but subjective.

Depend upon it, the law of progress and improvement is visible all around us—in England, at all events; and it is a mistake to go about in a discontented spirit, looking wistfully on the past, and saying, "There were giants on the earth in those days." The matter has been settled long ago by the wisest of men, or rather by divine inspiration (Eccles. vii. 10): "Say not thou, What is the cause that the former days were better than these? for thou dost not enquire wisely concerning this."

In happy keeping with this divine text is the experience of the well-known American author, Albert Barnes, in his recent treatise, entitled, "Life at Threescore."

"Permit me to say that I am, at this period of my life, *hopeful* in regard to the world: to truth, to religion, to liberty, to the advancement of the race. The world is growing better, not worse. It is better now than it was sixty years ago; it is be-

coming better every year, every month, every day. In its progress, society takes hold of all that is valuable, or that constitutes real improvement, and will not let it die. That which is worthless is superseded by that which is useful; that which is injurious and wrong is dropped by the way; that which goes permanently into the good order of the world alone is retained. There is more love of truth than there was sixty years ago; there is more science; there are more of the comforts of life; there is more freedom; there is more religion. There will be more in the next age than there is now; and so on to the end of time. Christianity never had so firm a hold on the intelligent faith of mankind as it has now. It will have a firmer hold on the next age, and will extend its triumphs until the world—the whole world—shall be converted to the Saviour. Old men often feel that the world is growing worse. I have not that feeling now; by the grace of God I shall never have it. I intend to hold on to the conviction which I now have at this mature period of my life, that the world is becoming better; I design to cherish this conviction when I die. I do not despond or despair in regard to men; to the church; to my country; to the cause of humanity; to the cause of freedom. I believe that the whole world will be converted to truth and righteousness; and if I should be spared to that period when I may speak of myself as 'old and gray-headed,' I intend that there shall be at least *one* aged man who will take a cheerful view of the world as he leaves it. Happy will he be who shall live in those times that are coming upon the world, and who shall see the full development of the things now springing up on the earth which tend to the recovery and redemption of the race! It is much to have lived sixty years in the period of the world like that which is now passed; it will be a much greater thing to live in those brighter and happier years which are soon to follow. With my views of heaven, I can indeed *envy*—even if envy were ever proper—no one who is to remain on the earth; and yet there are scenes to occur here below which one who cherishes such views as I do, and who is about to leave the world even with the hope of heaven, could not but desire to witness. I would be glad if these remarks might show you that as men advance in life it is not *necessary*, though it is so *common*, to feel that the world is becoming worse; and that a man who is soon to leave the earth himself *may* take such a view of human affairs as to enable him to utter a cheering word to those who are entering on the struggles of life, and show them that there is much for the church to hope for; much to live and labour for."

THE PEACOCK AND THE NIGHTINGALE.

A FABLE.

THE western sky's aglow with light,
The westering sun shines full and bright
On yonder lolly terrace-wall,
Where struts a peacock, grand and tall.
Proudly the bird his tail displays,
To catch the sunbeams' parting rays.
See! with what mingled scorn and grace,
As sultan of the feathered race,
He marches with majestic pace!

Regarding with complacent eye
The glory of the burnished sky,
As though for him, and him alone,
The splendour of the heavens shone.

Hard by, within a neighbouring dell,
Where lingers many a fairy-spell,
And blossoms many a sweet blue-bell,
Where modest cowslips bloom and bluish,
Where warblers many a mellow thrush,
Where, tricking through th' enamelled grass,
A little streamlet, clear as glass,
Accompanies with babbling tongue
Each cadence of the liquid song—
There, 'midst the branches of a thorn,
Whose pendant boughs salute the lawn,
A nightingale, with plumage neat
And modest mien, has ta'en his seat.

The peacock spies the lonely bird,
And thus accosts with scornful word—
"Why sit you there, poor silly thing,
With silent throat and russet wing,
While you sweet mavis pours his song,
The woodlands and the dells along?
Your dingy hue and aspect mean
Make you unpleasant to be seen;
While moping there, you ugly bird,
Your voice is never to be heard.
Nature herself, in blank despair,
Turns from a bird nor sweet nor fair,
And, opening wide her bounteous hand,
Replete with gems from fairy-land,
She scatters them with careless grace
Amidst the jewelled peacock race:
See how these gorgeous hues combine
To make my plumage all divine!
Mark well the rare and lustrous sheen,
The purple eyes, the lids of green,
Which, spangled o'er my royal tail,
Make e'en the stars themselves grow pale."
He spoke—and with disdainful stride
Swept grandly o'er the terrace wide.

The nightingale in russet suit
Thus brief replies:—"I am not mute,
Sir Peacock; but the throbbing gay
Pours forth his melody by day,
Whilst I more frequently delight
In eventide and moon-lit night:
'Tis true, my feathers do not shine,
Nor are they beautiful as thine;
In stature I am small and mean,
Compared with thee; no gorgeous green,
No royal purple decks my breast—
In splendour I am never drest;
But those you please with feathers gay,
You frighten by your voice away;
Whilst I, though poor and meanly clad,
Charm with my song each village lad;
Nay, e'en the coney and the deer
Will list my melody to hear."

He ceased—then bursting into song,
Produced a note so full and long,
So sweetly clear, so softly sad,
That village maid and village lad
Steal through the neighbouring thicket near
With stealthy step and list'ning ear;
The mavis ceased his dulcet strain,
As though all rivalry were vain;
The timid doe, the tender fawn,
Browse fearless 'neath the vocal thorn,
Whilst still pours forth that liquid strain
O'er wooded dell and flowery plain.

The peacock now with rage oppress'd,
And envy ranking in his breast,
Eyes with disdain the list'ning crowd,
Erects his head, and screams aloud:
The welkin vibrates with the sound,
The startled covey hies to ground,
Bounds from the lawn the timid doe,
As from the onslaught of a foe;
Belinda shrieks and homeward flies,
To 'scape these harsh and horrid cries;
Lubin, with many a muttered curse,
(Which only made the matter worse)
A stone picks from the river's bed,
And hurls it at the peacock's head.

MORAL.

When beauty, vanity, and pride
Are, as they often are, allied,
The light which shines in beauty's eye
Is dimmed and marred by vanity.
Say, is it modesty or pride
That gives the charm to blushing bride?
Does scornful mien or quiet grace
Enhance the beauty of a face?
My friends, despise not, mock not those
Who humbly dress in sober clothes,
Lest, haply, you should have a fall,
Like yonder peacock, from the wall.